



**Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Inc.**

775 Bloomfield Avenue • Windsor, CT 06095-2322  
(860) 298-4400 • Fax (860) 298-4408 • [www.cfba.org](http://www.cfba.org)

February 23, 2009

Testimony in regard to:

**Proposed Bill No. 569 AN ACT CONCERNING ENHANCEMENTS TO THE INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES ACT**

**Proposed Bill No. 5820 AN ACT CONSERVING NATURAL VEGETATION NEAR WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES**

**Proposed Bill No. 5461 AN ACT PRESERVING AND PROTECTING INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES**

Submitted by: Don Tuller, President, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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*The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of nearly 5,000 families dedicated to farmers and the future of Connecticut agriculture.*

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, members of the Environment Committee:

As President of Connecticut Farm Bureau and a farmer, I am submitting the following testimony to express Farm Bureau's concern about three proposed bills before you today. Proposed Bill No. 569, Proposed Bill No. 5461 and Proposed Bill No. seek to modify the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act.

I am a past member and former Chairman of Simsbury's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency and am quite familiar with current wetlands statutes. As proposed bills, the language is quite vague. Frankly, it is impossible to foresee what provisions they might contain if fully drafted. It is essential, however, that no language be included that damages or undermines farmers' as-of-right protections. Connecticut farmers have a solid record as good stewards of the land.

Because Connecticut defines wetlands by soil type, not wetness, thousands of acres of highly productive farmland fall into the wetlands categories. The management of any farmland is extremely dynamic. Rainfall, temperature and other weather factors, along with changes in seed availability and other inputs cause the decision making process to be subject to change. The current provisions in wetlands statutes recognize agricultures' special needs and should not be compromised.

I urge you to be mindful of farmers and take no action that would undermine farmers' ability to produce food and other agricultural goods. The future of agriculture and farming in Connecticut requires use of productive farmlands that lie in proximity to water.

*Don Tuller farms with his family on Tulmeadow Farm in West Simsbury.*